

# bikes for Kids Fall 2024

## Greetings from the Wheelhouse!!

Welcome to the 2024 newsletter from Bikes For Kids. We have had another spectacular year both in numbers and success stories, some of which are included in this issue.

### By the Numbers!

**1,425**

The number of bicycles Bikes for Kids donated in 2023.

**40**

The numbers of volunteers who come in each week to help repair bikes and do other things that keep us moving forward.

**1,200**

The number of bikes we have given out this year at this writing in mid November.

**28,663**

The number of bikes, to date, that have been provided to people, young and less young since our inception in 1989, 35 years ago.

Bike number **28,000** went out to a young lady in Hartford last June who told us that she had been wishing for a bike of her own for a very long time.

We would like to recognize all of our volunteers who come in regularly to repair bikes for eventually donation into the community. These are the people who make this all happen. Thank you all. We couldn't be where we are without you. Here's a shout out, too, to all of our friends who donate their bikes that are no longer needed and who send their financial support. It's a wonderful way to join us in our mission. Thank you.

Yes, most of the bikes that we donate go to children much closer to home. However, we try very hard to accommodate each request that comes our way. As this newsletter goes to print, we are working with Pastor Matias Rojas and his staff from M.O.R.E. International Ministries. They have taken possession of 111 bikes, trikes, scooters, etc and will make a special trip to the Dominican Republic for distribution. This will be followed by a similar delivery of bikes to several locations in the country of Kenya. We hope to receive and post photos of the kids receiving these bikes. Watch our website and Facebook feed.

### Retired and looking to donate some time?

Why not check out Bikes For Kids? You can crank some nuts and bolts with the crew or take advantage of several other opportunities. We'd love to hear from you. All it takes is a phone call to **860-388-BIKE**. Hope to hear from some of you. Our repair hours are Monday, Tuesday and Thursdays from 9:00-12:00.



Another load of bikes headed to deserving kids

# 6th Annual Polar Express

## The North Pole Express

Once again this year, we were able to collaborate with the Essex Steam Train to send 35 boys and girls up to the "North Pole" on a 90 minute ride on the North Pole Express. Each boy and girl met Santa and Mrs. Claus, enjoyed cookies, hot chocolate, and music all along the way. Afterwards, and unbeknownst to the kids, their parents brought them to the Wheelhouse where a special surprise awaited them. Everyone received a new bike, a winter coat, and a goody bag filled with hats, mittens, bike lights and locks. The kids were super excited and it was a very special and touching evening for us all. If you would like to sponsor a child for next year's ride, visit [BikesforKidsCt.org/sponsor](http://BikesforKidsCt.org/sponsor)".



35 new bikes that were given to grateful children.



A cheerful family enjoying our 6th Annual North Pole Express.



Children eagerly awaiting their new bikes!



Happy siblings waiting for their new bikes.



BFK had an amazing evening at the Wheelhouse after a memorable train ride. We were filled to capacity with kids, parents, excitement, happiness, gratitude and our volunteers.



This young lady is excited to explore more of her town on her brand new bicycle.



## Race for Chase

Race for Chase is a local CT organization formed to celebrate the life of Chase Kowalski, who was killed in the Sandy Hook tragedy. Race for Chase has been the recipient of hundreds of bicycles from Bikes for Kids over the years.



Cam, aged 6, participating in Race For Chase



## Essex Savings Bank Community Investment Program.

Essex Savings Bank Account holders, don't forget to mark your calendars for February again this year. That's the month when all account holders at the bank can vote for their three favorite charities. ESB divides a portion of their profits each year among local charities. Last year, thanks to all of your votes, we placed fourth out of almost 100 charities that applied. Thanks to ESB for their program that helps so many people in our local communities and thank you to all of you who cast a vote for us.

Our newest board member, John Yarmolovich is an avid cyclist with a passion for biking that spans decades. After taking a brief hiatus when he obtained his driver's license, John rekindled his passion in the 1980's, diving headfirst into mountain biking. His relentless pursuit of adventure led him to road biking, where he cultivated a deep appreciation for the freedom and exhilaration that cycling provides.

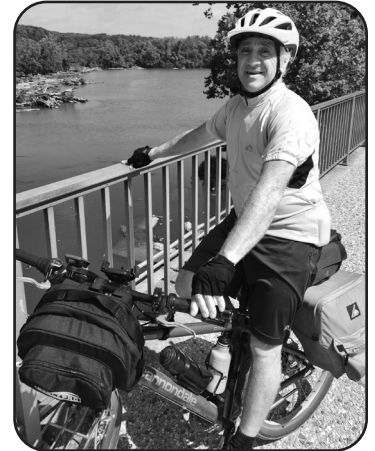
His journey has taken him on numerous bicycle tours and centuries, where he has embraced challenges and explored breathtaking landscapes. His commitment to self-sufficiency shines through in his hands-on approach to bike maintenance—repairing not only his own bike but also helping fellow cyclists with their repairs. His willingness to share his knowledge and skills reflects his belief in the power of community and the joy of biking.



Testing a pedal car

## A message from Lee, one of our volunteers:

Hi all. This is Lee. I just wanted everyone to know that I appreciate Bikes For Kids and all the hard work and dedication that the volunteers contribute. Also important to me is all the friendships I've made over the years which I cherish. For example, I always liked riding my bicycle but have fallen away from it since volunteering at BFK. Its associates encouraged me to get more involved with cycling and the cycling community which I am very appreciative of.



Lee Pelosi

I developed a lot of courage, confidence, skills, strength and endurance to reach some major achievements (a seven day, 420 mile ride along the Erie Canal, riding over 4,000 miles with friends in 2022 and the C&O Canal riding over 400 miles from Washington to Pittsburgh). We experienced 100 plus temperatures some days and miles of unexpected gravel paths. It ended up being so much fun.

Bikes For Kids gives back so much to the community. The volunteers have so much to offer. I have gained so much knowledge from them and are eager to share their knowledge and friendship.

I am grateful to be a part of Bikes For Kids and look forward to many more experiences to come in the upcoming years. I could go on, but I have some bikes to fix.

## Beat the Street

Our good friend Larry Pellisier runs an after school program in Meriden. Beat The Street provides programs such as modern dance, boxing, gardening and some others. The program is pretty popular in town but for some kids, too far to get to by foot. We are happy to announce that we have helped to increase Larry's numbers of kids attending by sending bikes his way. Larry distributes bikes to a lot of those walkers who can now attend his programs a lot easier.



bikesforkidsct.org

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860-388-BIKE (2453)

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Please join us on our mission to provide bikes  
to boys and girls in need.

We rely 100% on donor giving and support.

**Donate** To those of you who regularly support us with a check, you are helping to purchase helmets, lights, parts, supplies and to pay for the monthly rent. Scan the QR code or donate on-line at [bikesforkidsct.org](http://bikesforkidsct.org).

**Donate Bikes** Drop gently used bike(s) at the BFK Wheelhouse.

**Join the Crew** Crank nuts and bolts:  
Monday, Tuesday, and Thursdays from 9:00 – 12:00.  
We are trying to consistently staff Thursday evenings from 6:00-8:00.

**Other ways to help** Would you like to join us on our mission to provide bikes to boys and girls in need? We need help in grant writing, fund raising, and running events.

**Request a Bike** In order to be as efficient as possible, and to honor requests as fast as we can we are asking that all requests in the future be made through our web site at [Bikesforkidsct.org](http://Bikesforkidsct.org). Click on "How to Request a Bike". We will receive your request electronically and call you regarding the pick up of your bike(s) when ready.

